

SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY
PUBLIC WORKSHOP
ALTURAS, CA
APRIL 10, 2007

PROGRAM GUIDELINES
QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. **Everything looks comprehensive, but the SNC vision/mission includes efforts to improve “social” well-being as well. What about addressing that? Would projects connected to schools, housing, disaster relief, etc. be covered in the program areas?**
2. I see that you’ve “stolen” the “three Cs” (coordination, cooperation, and consultation) from the Public Rangelands Improvement Act. Do you subscribe to the same meanings for those as the federal government does? Are those three defined in State statute somewhere?
3. Comment from Farm Bureau representative: Regarding page 12, “Available Tools, Methods and Resources”: We could use technical assistance/research assistance. Do you plan on hiring staff who can provide, or maybe just access through the University of California Extension, etc.? Specifically, are you planning on hiring staff with a background in range management or natural resource management? Suggest that you do. Based on the economic background of the region, it makes sense to have timber and range management persons available.
4. **Regarding Program Guidelines, pages 12-13, “Acquisitions”: “The conservancy shall cooperate with and consult with the city or county where ...an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired...” What does this mean?** Modoc County is a coordinating county and has a land use committee, which makes recommendations to the board of supervisors regarding land use. **Please clarify the process and timing for “cooperation and consultation”.**
5. “Cooperation and consultation” language doesn’t sound much stronger than “inform”, but if the county supports the project, that seems okay.
6. Regarding Program Guidelines, page 16, “SNC Sub-Regional Priorities”: Do you see the SNC participating as a stakeholder in the processes of agencies who are developing priorities? One example is the development of a watershed management plan, but others are also possible.
7. **Regarding page 15, “Eligible Applicants”: The nonprofit organization definition is too narrow based on the types of things you want to see done, such as job training or working on other social issues.** This is more geared to environmental non-governmental organizations and others who are resource-oriented.

8. If a nonprofit has a mission that educates people regarding cultural heritage, etc., would that fit in the nonprofit definition? In the information I've received from you, cultural heritage is a big topic.
9. **The SNC may receive real property – does that mean the SNC would own property?**
10. **If the SNC was gifted or otherwise received land and didn't want to hold it, who could it go to?**
11. I hope you'll forgive us for being nervous about conservation easements and acquisitions in this part of the world. We don't have a lot (of private land) to play with.
12. If a landowner fails to meet the conditions of the easement, it may go to the State then, too.
13. Comment from Bob Kirkwood, SNC Board member: Regarding page 12, "Available Tools, Methods and Resources": We're about to put on the SNC web site an idea for a web conversation on natural upstream storage. Not sure where that sort of thing goes in here, maybe as a convener?
14. **Will you be able to be of any help in providing information on other funding sources?**
15. **The SNC recently hosted a meeting for federal land managers in the Sierra. What is the possibility of doing similar convening with other State agencies?**

GRANT GUIDELINES QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. I thought there was funding in Prop. 84 for watershed coordinators for Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs). Is that the case?
2. **Is a working landscape conservation easement fundable under Prop. 84?**
3. Can the SNC fund the California Rangeland Trust for conservation easements?
4. **How will we know when grant opportunities are open?**
5. Can you fund positions in other State/federal/local government agencies? Funding an activity is a strategy that could help with the Farm Bureau request in comment #3 on the Program Guidelines (see above).
6. **Regarding Grant Guidelines, page 2, "Eligible Projects": Could you use funding for feasibility, engineering, or design studies for projects that you can't get full funding for? (In reference to comment from Jim Branham, SNC Executive Officer, that the words "contribute to" would likely be added at the start of Objectives 1-4) There are lots of big projects that you can't do because of the cycle of funding; you can't do an Environmental Impact Report, engineering, and planning in three years. Or give us a five- to six-year grant cycle so that you have time to do all that stuff. Don't mind doing small projects, but others need to be considered, too.**

7. **Are you trying to fund half and half between site improvements and acquisition – 50 percent one type and 50 percent the other?**
8. **For how many years must the site improvement management agreement be maintained?**
9. Comment from Bob Kirkwood, SNC Board Member: We have had discussions regarding sustainability, and we want to fund projects of lasting value. Regarding tenure, what would be the timing for the site agreement relative to the issuance of the grant?
10. The Wildlife Conservation Board looks at 25 years for the length of their management agreements.
11. **Will individual project proposals need to describe what they expect regarding tenure; will there be room for negotiation on that?**
12. Each project sounds like it's going to be different (regarding the length of the management agreement).
13. I hate to see a fund creating new owners that taxpayers have to provide services to. **Is it beyond the scope of this to have a requirement that new owners pay assessments and taxes?** If property taxes are your contingency fund (as a local government), they're a big deal.
14. **Comment from Brian Dahle, SNC Board Member: If an acquisition ends up going off the tax rolls – we don't want to see that.**
15. **I suggest that any grantee should continue to pay property taxes regardless of the status of the property. Easements may also be a future issue for taxes due to the loss of land value.**
16. **Comment from Bob Kirkwood, SNC Board Member: Regarding Grant Guidelines, page 6, "Project Proposal and Evaluation": Unlike in the Program Guidelines, I don't see a "context" evaluation point here, i.e. an evaluation of what's happening on surrounding lands. Would like to see that.**
17. **Regarding Grant Guidelines, page 11, "Strategic Opportunity Grants (SOGs)": The first paragraph only talks about the \$1 million per subregion. Is this section also intended to cover the \$2 million in grants for projects that have region-wide significance? The language needs to be clear.**
18. Regarding easements, what happens if the purpose of the easement goes away? For example, if trail access across private land is no longer needed, the easement should dissolve.

OTHER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Is there a statutory basis for the use of, or coordination with, other agencies' specialists? How would that be structured administratively for you? For example, the use of federal specialists from the United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), etc.

2. Will you develop template language for easements? I like the idea that the language be no more restrictive than the purpose for the purchase in the first place.
3. **BLM has the idea of a developing a “grass bank” for livestock to graze for a couple of years while their range is being reestablished.**
4. The RCD here is interested in something similar to the BLM idea.
5. The BLM has a juniper management/sagebrush management project also. This would be a cross-jurisdictional effort.
6. **The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection stated that they spend a lot of time with the USFS and BLM with inmate crews. They see Lassen/Modoc work as a continuing effort, and wonder if this might lead to an increase in camps or camp size.**
7. It is not just conservation camp crews who could deliver that type of service; the California Conservation Corps and others could also. **Would love to have a 20-room dorm to house workers; could keep them busy year-round.**
8. **Comment from Brian Dahle, SNC Board Member: A big priority is to help private landowners do conservation work on their own property, such as cut bank restoration and plug-and-pond meadow restoration. We are also aggressively trying to fire-safe communities.**
9. Fire Safe Councils play a big role in fuel reduction. The prioritization of this is important. There is not just the potential for property damage, but also the potential for the loss of human life.
10. The State in-lieu process is broke, and the Special Districts are operating on a shoestring.

SUBREGIONAL ISSUES RAISED

1. Social well-being
 - Schools
 - Housing
 - Disaster relief
2. Working landscapes
 - Technical/research assistance needs
 - Conservation easements
3. Watershed management
4. Cultural heritage
5. CEQA/NEPA compliance
6. Site management
7. Tax implications of acquisitions
8. Protecting, conserving, and restoring living resources
9. Fuel reduction